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Letter dated 15 March 2004 from the Permanent Representative of Burundi to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to transmit to you a letter from the Burundian Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, Mr. Térence Sinunguruza, addressed to you (see annex).

I should be grateful if you could have my letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Marc **Nteturuye**
Permanent Representative

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Annex to the letter dated 15 March 2004 from the Permanent Representative of Burundi to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

Acting on instructions from my Government I have the honour to reiterate that the Government of Burundi hopes that the Security Council will authorize the sending of a peacekeeping mission to support the implementation of the Arusha Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Burundi, signed on 28 August 2000, and of the ceasefire agreements concluded with the armed movements.

The Government of Burundi believes that Burundians have made tremendous efforts to further the peace process and it looks to the United Nations, which is both sponsor and depositary of the Peace Agreement, to contribute to the success of the final phase leading to peace in Burundi, as it has done for other nations.

The African Mission in Burundi has done very commendable work, notwithstanding the inadequate financial and logistical resources at its disposal. We believe that at the present stage it would be a good idea to turn it into a United Nations peacekeeping mission in order to continue with the most sensitive phase of the peace process that should lead to peace at last in Burundi.

The purpose of a peacekeeping operation in Burundi would be to create conditions conducive to the implementation of all the provisions of the agreements that have been signed, and its main tasks would be as follows:

- To encourage the implementation of the Peace Agreement and to create conditions conducive to the conclusion of an overall ceasefire;
- To ensure that the ceasefire was respected;
- To contribute to the confinement and disarmament of combatants, to demobilization and the removal of weapons from the population;
- To help with the setting up of new defence and security forces and the reintegration of the demobilized;
- To secure the work of international investigators and witnesses in the context of the work of the international commission of judicial inquiry and the national truth and reconciliation commission, essential tools for combating impunity and for the national reconciliation campaign;
- To create the security conditions necessary for the return of refugees and internally displaced persons to their property;
- To facilitate humanitarian action and the resumption of reconstruction work and economic development;
- In close collaboration with the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) and neighbouring countries, to help strengthen security and confidence at the borders by monitoring transborder movements and combating the dangerous circulation of arms in the subregion. The interconnection of the peace processes in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and in Burundi and their impact on the entire subregion needs no further demonstration.

In view of the work to be done, the Government of Burundi believes that such a mission should be provided with substantial means and, above all, with an adequate mandate under chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations.

The ceasefire is holding in 16 of the country's 17 provinces because the Government, the Conseil nationale pour la défense de la démocratie-Forces pour la défense de la démocratie (CNDD-FDD) and the other armed movements which have joined in the peace process are fulfilling their commitments. However, the ceasefire is a fragile one as armed former combatants continue to move around within the population and any unfortunate incident could rekindle the fire and jeopardize all the progress made thus far. The Forces nationales de libération of Agathon Rwasa have not yet come to the negotiating table, although there is a very real possibility that they will lay down their arms.

Moreover, the end of the transition period, which is scheduled for 1 November 2004, presupposes that general elections will be held in October. This will require that certain political, security, psychological and humanitarian conditions be met in order that the elections may be truly peaceful, free, fair and transparent. The presence of a United Nations peacekeeping mission could contribute to the creation of such conditions.

The Burundian people have suffered greatly from the war. They look to the United Nations to provide its customary support so that the progress already made may be consolidated and final peace may be achieved at last. The time for the United Nations to become directly involved is now or never, before it is too late.

I should be grateful if you could have this letter circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Térence **Sinunguruza**
Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation